

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-78 are pending in the present application.

In the Official Action, Claims 1-78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Vail et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,760,151, hereinafter Vail).

Applicants note that Vail was filed on April 27, 2000 which is after the filing date of Applicants' priority document JP 11-251528 filed on September 6, 1999. A certified translation of JP Applicants' priority document 11-251528 is provided herewith.

Accordingly, in light of the previous discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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